

Department of the Interior Secretarial Order 3356

October 4, 2017

On September 15, 2017, Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Ryan Zinke issued [Secretarial Order \(S.O.\) 3356](#), “Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories.” S.O. 3356 directs bureaus and offices within DOI, in collaboration with states, tribes, and territorial partners, to implement programs to enhance hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting (HFRS) opportunities on DOI-managed lands and waters, while also promoting conservation activities. Reactions to S.O. 3356 have been mixed, with some claiming that it will improve access to federal lands and facilitate HFRS and conservation activities and others stating that it is unnecessary because federal land management already considers these activities.

S.O. 3356 is an extension of [S.O. 3347](#), “Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation,” which was issued by Secretary Zinke on March 2, 2017 (see **Table 1** for a timeline of selected administrative activities on HFRS opportunities on federal lands). S.O. 3347 required the completion of two reports: one to assess the implementation of [Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13443](#), “Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation,” signed by President George W. Bush on August 16, 2007, and provide recommendations to improve further implementation; and the other to provide specific recommendations to enhance recreational fishing. S.O. 3347 required that these reports be shared with the [Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council](#) and the [Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council](#), respectively, for consensus recommendations so that DOI could identify specific actions to expand access for HFRS activities; improve coordination with states; improve habitat for fish and wildlife; manage predators effectively; and facilitate greater public access to DOI lands.

Building on S.O. 3347, S.O. 3356 directs DOI bureaus and offices to, among other activities,

- implement recommendations from S.O. 3347;
- increase access to DOI lands and waters for HFRS activities;
- update and amend regulations and management plans to include HFRS activities, including increasing opportunities in national monuments;
- improve opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as veterans and youth, to enhance HFRS traditions; and
- increase migratory waterfowl populations and hunting opportunities while improving habitat conservation efforts.

Proponents of S.O. 3356, as reflected in the comments in the S.O. 3356 [press release](#), emphasize that the order will facilitate access to federal lands and waters for HFRS opportunities and contend that federal lands are owned by all U.S. citizens and should be managed accordingly. Furthermore, proponents

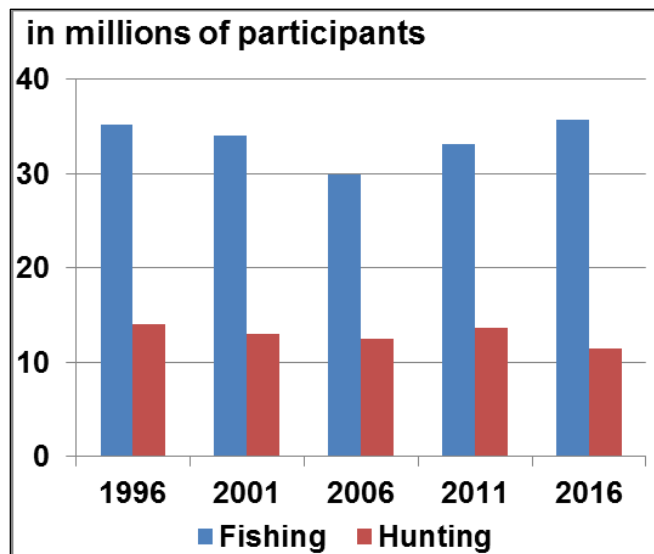
highlight that S.O. 3356 will further conservation interests and guarantee these activities are safeguarded and promoted sustainably. Others [criticize](#) S.O. 3356, by stating that HFRS activities are already included in existing multiple-use land management practices and that S.O. 3356 seeks to distract from other activities that could diminish environmental protection of federal lands, such as increasing energy and mineral production and altering national monuments.

Table 1. Selected Activities to Facilitate Hunting and Fishing on Federal Lands

Date	Event	Description
August 16, 2007	E.O. 13443 issued by President George W. Bush	E.O. 13443 directed federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities, called for a Conference on North American Wildlife Policy , and required publication of a Recreational Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Plan .
April 16, 2010	Presidential Memorandum issued by President Barack Obama	Memorandum established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative aimed at promoting conservation and reconnecting Americans with the outdoors and called for the publication of an action plan as well as progress reports in 2011 and 2012 .
March 2, 2017	S.O. 3347 issued by DOI Secretary Ryan Zinke	S.O. 3347 sought to enhance conservation stewardship; increase outdoor recreation; and improve the management of game species and their habitat by assessing implementation of E.O. 13443.
September 15, 2017	S.O. 3356 issued by DOI Secretary Ryan Zinke	S.O. 3356 continued the Department of the Interior's efforts to enhance conservation stewardship; increase outdoor recreation opportunities; and improve the management of game species and their habitats.

Hunting and Fishing

S.O. 3356 describes hunting and fishing activities as steeped in tradition and integral to conservation. [Survey data](#) showed diverging trends for participation in these areas in recent years (see **Figure 1** below). These results are from a national survey sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assessing hunting, fishing, and wildlife-associated recreation. Preliminary data showed a decrease in hunting participation of 2.2 million individuals (16%) between 2011 and 2016 and an increase in fishing participation of 2.6 million individuals (8%) over the same period. Longer-term trends for hunting and fishing show fluctuation in participation, making it difficult to ascertain trends (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. Trends in Hunting and Fishing Participation, 1996-2016

Source: Department of the Interior, Department of Commerce, and Bureau of the Census, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and Preliminary 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

Hunting, Fishing, and Recreational Shooting in the 115th Congress

HFRS has also been addressed in legislative activity in the 115th Congress; see below for selected examples of legislation proposing changes in these areas. A more detailed discussion of these bills is available in CRS In Focus IF10746, *Hunting, Fishing, and Related Issues in the 115th Congress*.

H.R. 3668, the Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act, was reported out of the Natural Resources Committee on September 18, 2017 (H.Rept. 115-314). The SHARE Act contains 22 titles that would aim to increase access and opportunities for HFRS on federal lands and waters and address endangered species, firearms, existing conservation laws, and other topics.

S. 733, the Sportsmen's Act, was reported out of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on June 22, 2017 (S.Rept. 115-116). S. 733 contains six titles and would aim to increase access to federal lands for HFRS activities, facilitate construction and expansion of public shooting ranges, allow for the transport of bows in the national park system, and address other topics. S. 1460, the Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017, introduced on June 28, 2017, contains similar provisions to S. 733 as well as additional provisions addressing firearms at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water resource development projects, lead in fishing tackle, and other issues within its natural resource section (Division B).

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